



How to Lift and Carry Safely

Lifting and carrying are power jobs—when you lift and carry the wrong way, you can damage your back. Back injuries are the most common type of injury in the workplace, causing approximately 900,000 disabling injuries in 1995. Over half of these injuries are from lifting.

Back injuries may be difficult to treat and may have lengthy and expensive rehabilitation times.

Whether you are lifting at home or at work, make an effort to take care of your back. The National Safety Council recommends a number of tips to prevent unintentional injuries and keep your back strong and healthy.

Power warm-ups

You will work better if you start each day with slow stretches. These warm-ups let you ease

Leg and back warm-up	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prop one foot on a chair or a stool for support2. Take a deep breath3. Ease forward slowly—keep your back slightly curved4. Blow slowly outward as you ease forward to a seven count5. Repeat seven times6. Switch and do the same with the other foot
Backbend	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Stand with your feet about 12 inches apart2. Support the small of your back with your hands3. Hold your stomach in firmly and take a deep breath4. Arch backward—bend your head and neck as you go, blowing air slowly out for seven counts5. Repeat seven times
Power lifting tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect your hands and feet by wearing safety gear• Size up the load—tip it on its side to see if you can carry it comfortably. Get help if the load is too big or bulky for one person. Check for nails, splinters, rough strapping and sharp edges• Lift it right—make sure your footing is solid. Keep your back straight, with no curving or slouching. Center your body over your feet, get a good grip on the object and pull it close to you. Pull your stomach in firmly. Lift with your legs, not your back; if you need to turn, move your feet and don't twist your back
Tough lifting jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversized loads: do not try to carry a big load alone; ask for help. Work as a team by lifting, walking and lowering the load together. Let one person call the shots and direct the lift. Use proper mechanical devices for heavy loads.• High loads: use a step stool or a sturdy ladder to reach loads that are above your shoulders. Get as close to the load as you can and slide the load toward you. Do all the work with your arms and legs, not your back.• Low loads: loads that are under racks and cabinets need extra care. Pull the load toward you, then try to support it on one knee before you lift. Use your legs to power the lift.• Always use your stomach as a low back support by pulling it in during lifting.• Remember, a strong, healthy, powerful back is vital to your job. It also helps you enjoy life. Take pains to avoid injuries by making it a full-time job to take care of your back!

LIFTING SAFELY



Who's at **risk**?

The service industry has the highest incidence of injuries due to overexertion in lifting, followed by retail and manufacturing. But anytime you pick up a box or a heavy object – at work or at home – you put yourself at risk.

You can avoid injury by following these safe lifting tips:

- Estimate the weight of the object by tilting it up slowly. If it's hard to move, it's too heavy to lift. Get help, or use a lifting aid.
- Keep the object you're lifting as close to your body as possible.
- Avoid twisting your back as you lift. Instead, move your feet to turn.
- Always lift with your legs, not your back.
- Objects with lifting handles make the job easier and reduce the strain on your back.
- Keep a firm footing, and plan your route to avoid tripping hazards.
- Strengthen your back and abdominal muscles with regular exercise.
- Spend a few minutes every day before work on power warm-ups.
- Watch your weight. Extra pounds cause extra strain on your back.

Sources: *The Lifting Challenge*, National Safety Council, 2000
Lifting and Carrying, National Safety Council, 2003



PREVENTING FALLS IN THE WORKPLACE



Who's at **risk**?

If you walk, you're at risk. Slips, trips, and falls happen in every workplace, from corporate environments to manufacturing plants. However, most fall-related injuries happen in the service industry – and most fall-related deaths occur on construction sites.

Follow these **tips** to avoid serious injury from a fall:

- Keep all aisles, stairs and walkways free of clutter.
- Open cabinet drawers are a tripping hazard; keep them closed when you're not using them.
- Turn on the lights before you enter a room. And report any burned-out bulbs to housekeeping as soon as possible.
- Always use handrails on the stairs, and take one step at a time.
- Broken stairs or loose stair coverings? Report them right away!
- Make wide turns around corners, so you can see who's coming.
- If you spot a spill, clean it up or report it immediately.
- Stay away from shortcuts. The route less traveled may be less safe!
- Don't overload – take only what you can carry comfortably, and make sure you can see over it.
- When walking on a wet or slippery surface, slow down, take small steps, and keep a hand free for balance.
- Make sure chains, guardrails, or warning tapes are in place around elevated areas.
- Keep all harnesses and other fall protection equipment in working order, and use them correctly.
- Wear the right shoes for the job, and keep the soles clean for better traction.



Source: *Preventing Slips and Falls*, National Safety Council, 1993

PREVENTING FALLS IN THE HOME



Who's at **risk**?

Falls can happen to anyone - they're the leading cause of unintentional injury death in the home and community. But those 65 and older are most at risk. Falls are the major reason for injury-related death and hospital admission for this age group.

Follow these **tips** to prevent falls in and around your home:

- Reduce clutter on floors and stairs, and safely tuck telephone and electrical cords out of walkways.
- Keep floors clean. Clean up grease, water and other liquids immediately. Don't wax floors.
- Use non-skid throw rugs to reduce your chance of slipping on linoleum.
- Get a grip! Install handrails in stairways. Have grab bars in the bathroom, by toilets and in the tub or shower.
- Make sure living areas are well lit. We can all trip and fall in the dark.
- Use a sturdy step stool with hand rails when reaching for something in a high place.
- Stay one step ahead of fallen leaves, snow and ice. Clear them from walkways before they become slipping hazards.
- Periodically check the condition of outdoor walks and steps, and repair any damage immediately.
- Fill any holes or depressions in your yard that might pose a tripping hazard.

Source: *Don't Take the Plunge...*
National Safety Council, 2004





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Materials Handling Checklist

This checklist was developed using material from two sources: Lifting Checklist for Employers (taken from A Guide to Manual Materials Handling, by A. Mital, A.S. Nicholson and M.M. Ayoub, Taylor & Francis Inc. Bristol, PA, 1993) and a checklist developed by American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

Employer checklist

Lifting

- Provide mechanical assist devices, table or pallets to allow waist-height lifting
- Encourage employees to get assistance in moving bulky/ heavy loads
- Make loads smaller
- Eliminate risk of sudden movement or shifting load
- Reduce lifting and lowering distances
- Reduce carrying distances
- Schedule regular rest breaks for employees doing heavy physical work; ensure breaks are taken

Awkward Postures

- Examine workstations to ensure the equipment and work area allow workers to perform tasks in safest positions and postures
- Create good workplace design to minimize unnecessary bending, twisting, or reaching
- Eliminate space constraints that prevent good posture

Working Environment

- Provide clean workplace free of obstacles, spills, and elevation changes with good lighting and traffic patterns for materials movement
- Provide non-skid, cushioned floors
- Regularly review accident and injury records to identify problem areas and eliminate hazards
- Encourage early evaluation and treatment of injuries

Employee checklist

Lifting

- Keep lifted objects close to body at hip or waist level
- Evenly balance load with both arms
- Get help if load is too bulky or heavy to lift alone or split into smaller, lighter loads
- Take rest breaks and stretch
- Avoid twisting, bending, and reaching while lifting

Awkward Postures

- Monitor workstation and habits to incorporate improved ways to sit/ stand/ move
- Make sure work surface is at comfortable height
- Alternate between sitting and standing tasks
- Use a chair with good back support

Working Environment

- Maintain firm footing and wear comfortable, low-heeled, closed toe, non-slip shoes
 - Reports and/ or work to eliminate hazards in the workplace
 - See a doctor if you have a back injury or other illness
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Environmental, Health, & Safety Articles

Avoiding Slips, Trips and Falls in the Office

Slips, trips, and falls constitute the majority of general industry accidents. In the U.S., they cause 15 percent of all accidental, job-related deaths and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities, according to the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Housekeeping

So how can we all remain safe while at work? Some of the most frequently overlooked general safety precautions involve office housekeeping. Here are some suggestions from OSHA and the National Safety Council (NSC) for "Good Office Housekeeping".

Corridors, Stairs and Flooring

In order to maintain safe floor surfaces and walkways throughout the workplace:

- Keep all corridors, passageways, storerooms, and service areas clear of debris, boxes and storage. Never block these areas, even temporarily. Emergencies don't usually come with advanced warning and are not likely to give you time to clear cluttered escape paths.
- Keep stairwells clear at all times. Do not store boxes, files, or other debris in the stairwells or landings.
- Pick up dropped pencils, paper clips, and rubber bands that can cause you or a co-worker to skid.
- Contact building management if you see areas that are cluttered with rubbish.
- Wipe up spills immediately. If a spill is too large to clean up quickly, contact building management
- Report uneven, defective flooring, worn spots in carpets, chipped tiles, and worn stair treads to building management
- In areas where wet or damp conditions are likely to routinely exist, appropriate drainage should be maintained and grating, mats, raised platforms, or anti-slip strips should be evaluated and considered for control or prevention of slippery conditions.
- Every floor, work area, and passageway should be kept clear of obstructions that protrude into the walkway or have the potential to result in unsure footing, such as loose parts, boxes, packing material, or tools. This includes areas where construction or demolition debris has the potential of negatively impacting permanent or temporary walkways.

Common Filing Areas

In order to keep filing areas safe, the NSC suggests these procedures:

- Store the heaviest materials in the bottom drawer.
- Never leave the upper drawers of a file cabinet open.
- Open only one drawer at a time.
- Never open a drawer if someone is crouched below it.
- Shut a file drawer immediately after removing files.
- Use the handle when closing a drawer to help reduce pinch-point injuries.

The NSC also emphasizes the importance of keeping common areas clear of personal belongings, clutter, and wastepaper baskets. This does not preclude having a recycling container for common use.

A Little Common Sense Goes A Long Way in Office Safety

You can reduce your risk of office injuries from slips, trips, and falls with a little vigilance over the common things many of us take for granted, such as the way we sit in a chair, walk up the stairs, or carry writing implements in our pockets.

- Never tilt backward in a chair, especially on a tile floor. The chair can give out under your weight if it is not used properly and you could land on your back.
- Take care when going from well-lit to dark areas. The better you can see, the less likely you are to trip over objects on the floor, or to slip on wet surfaces. So give your eyes time to adjust if you cannot see at first.
- Always carry pens and pencils in a pocket, with the points facing down, and not in your hand. This is especially important on stairs, where you should always have one hand free to hold onto the railing for balance.

Here are some other ideas to help you reduce office slips, trips, and falls:

- Use the handrail on staircases.
- Look where you are going.
- Walk, don't run.
- Stay to the right in the United States.
- Slow down and steer closer to the right at corners.
- Walk with extra care on wet surfaces.
- Wear appropriate shoes for the surfaces on which you work or have to walk on to get to work.